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James McPherson

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H.R. Rep. No. 194, 24th Cong., 1st Sess. (1836)

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JAMES McPHERSON.

JANUARY 20, 1836.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. E. WHITTLESEY, from the Committee of Claims, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee of Claims, to which was referred the petition of James McPherson, report :

That the petitioner was a sub Indian agent and interpreter, from the year 1812 to the year 1830, under John Johnston, an Indian agent for the States of Ohio and Indiana; during which period, he alleges, he furnished his own quarters, firewood, and subsistence, and was put to great expense in feeding the Indians who visited him, and in furnishing their horses with forage; that having been taken prisoner by the Indians about fifty years ago, and remaining a considerable time with them, he was the more frequently visited by them on matters pertaining to his agency, and the expense incurred for their subsistence was very considerable; that there was not, at any time, a public magazine or store of provisions from which stores could be drawn for their use, within the limits of his agency; that he understands the practice of the Indian Department has been to furnish the agents and interpreters, at the public expense, with quarters, firewood, and compensation for feeding the Indians; for all of which, he avers, he has never received any allowance, which he now claims. He states his account thus :

"The United States, to Jas. McPherson, (formerly sub Indian agent and interpreter to the Seneca and Shawanese Indians; of Lewistown, Ohio.)

Dr. To compensation, in lieu of house rent, fuel, and subsistence to the Indians, from the year 1812 to the year 1830, 19 years, at \$125 per annum *\$2,375 00"*

To which account is appended the certificate of John Johnson, who states that the petitioner served the United States within the limits of his agency from the period set forth in his memorial; and that, during that time, he never received any compensation, either in money or kind, for house rent, fuel, candles, or contingencies for himself, or subsistence to the Indians; that he was a faithful, meritorious, and highly useful public servant, and that he believes his claim for \$125 per annum, amounting to \$2,375, is just and reasonable, and ought to be allowed; to which he subscribes his name as formerly agent for Indian affairs in Ohio and Indiana.

The honorable Mr. Vance, and the honorable Mr. Crane, members of Congress from the State of Ohio, in their letters here referred to, as a part of this report, state that the petitioner is a man of honesty and integrity, and concur in the opinion that he had great influence with the Indians, a fact notorious in all that region of country. General Vance states that the petitioner was a trader among the Indians for a great many years, and that he never claimed any thing from the Government to remunerate him for bad debts, whilst others, with not half the claim, have received thousands of dollars from the Treasury under treaty stipulations, and conclude by advancing the opinion that the office of the petitioner was more of a burden than a profit to him.

The case was referred to the committee at the last session of Congress, and information obtained from the Second Auditor, as to what had been usual as to making allowances in the like cases. His letter, dated 19th of February, 1835, is among the papers, and made a part of this report. As there is no precedent for making the allowance asked for, and as the law gives a specific compensation, the committee do not think it would be prudent or safe to make an allowance, which must, to preserve uniformity, tend to increase the compensation of all the sub Indian agents, from the commencement of the Government to the present time, the following resolution is submitted :

Resolved, The prayer of the petitioner ought not to be granted.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Second Auditor's Office, February 19, 1835.

SIR : In reply to your letter of the 9th instant, addressed to the Third Auditor, and by him referred to this office on the 10th, in relation to a petition presented by James McPherson, of Logan county, Ohio, claiming compensation for house rent, fuel, and subsistence to the Indians, from 1812 to 1830, 19 years, at \$125 per annum, and amounting to \$2,375, I have the honor to state, that it is not customary to allow house rent and fuel to the sub-agents, the pay of \$500 per annum being considered in full for his services ; nor am I able to find on the files of this office any precedent, as yet, for such an allowance.

On the 15th of February, 1833, a claim for rent of quarters for five years, ending in 1829, made by Pearson Brearley, sub-agent to the Cherokees, rejected by the Secretary of War, on the ground that his salary of \$500 per annum, was considered in full for his services.

No compensation is allowed, nor authority given, to sub-agents for feeding the Indians, except to those who correspond directly with the Department at stations where no agents are employed.

Mr. James McPherson was in the limits of the agency of John Johnson, and paid by him ; he rendered no accounts to the Department, and if he has incurred expenses in feeding the Indians, he ought to have so stated in his quarterly returns to the agent, subjoining abstracts of issues duly certified, stating the number of Indians thus fed, and the purposes for which they visited him, as required by the regulations. Those accounts would then, in due time, have been submitted to the Department by the agent, and allowed or disallowed according to the decision of the Secretary of War.

In relation to this matter, I must also state, that to sub-agents under the control of agents, as was the case with Mr. McPherson, the allowance is not usual, nor is there any recollection of such a charge ever having been admitted in this office.

I have the honor, herewith, to return Mr. McPherson's account and petition.

I remain, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
W. B. LEWIS.

The Hon. JOHN H. FULTON,
House of Representatives.

REPORT

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE, IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, PASSED MARCH 20, 1812, RELATIVE TO THE ACCOUNT OF JAMES MCPHERSON, AGENT OF THE SAID OFFICE, IN THE YEAR 1811. BY JOHN H. FULTON, MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. WASHINGTON: G. LEITCH, PRINTER, 1812.

Printed at the Office of the General Land Office, Feb. 20, 1812.

You are hereby appointed agent to reside in the neighborhood of the Woods and Mills, within the limits of the Territory of Wisconsin, and to receive the sum of two hundred dollars per month, and two dollars per day. Your duties will consist in the sale of the lands of the said Territory as they may be offered for sale, and to keep the same constantly informed of every thing you may